

Privacy in the Information Age

Identity theft: Penalties for the crime of identity theft and attempted identity theft were increased. Victims of identity theft were given the right to sue to regain their losses in civil court even if the person who committed the crime was not convicted in criminal court.

What is a Marriage?

Protection of Traditional Marriage: The legislature passed a measure that submits to the voters a proposed amendment to the Missouri Constitution defining marriage as being between a man and a woman.

A Culture of Life

Parental Consent: A bill that would have made an adult who took a minor across state lines in order to get around Missouri's parental consent law legally liable if a lawsuit was brought was stalled by the resistance of a determined minority in the Senate. This bill also contained language similar to Sen. Bartle's SB 1071 that would have prohibited a person with a financial interest in performing abortions (like Planned Parenthood employees) from having special status to help a minor apply to the court for an abortion without parental permission. This legislation also required doctors who perform abortions to have surgical privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the abortion clinic

Education

The Joint Committee on "Education Red Tape": The Joint Committee on Education Red Tape was created to, among other things, analyze the rules concerning administrative burdens placed on teachers and identify opportunities that will allow for greater freedom to improve teaching opportunities. Senator Bartle will serve on this committee.

MAP Testing Streamlined: The MAP test administered to Missouri's school children was the subject of a great deal of debate this session. Due to differing assessment standards between the state and federal governments, Missouri schools were ranking unnecessarily low. The "Truth in Testing" provisions passed by the legislature will streamline the standards used to analyze the MAP test. Performance standards will now meet the federal requirements already in place, ensuring a more fair assessment of Missouri's educational system.

The MAP test was also addressed in another bill this session. Senate Bill 968 will allow school districts to offer incentives or impose supplementary work as a consequence of low student performance on the MAP test. This bill will also allow retired teachers and employees of districts that lapse, are merged with another district, divide or otherwise lose their structure to continue to have access to health care.

Housekeeping

Miscellaneous: Several bills were passed to name sections of state highways after highway patrol officers killed in the line of duty and famous Missourians like Laura Ingalls Wilder; and lest you think that legislators don't have a sense of humor, the "Hadrosaur" was named the official state dinosaur!

Common Sense

Obesity Lawsuits: The manufacturers, distributors and sellers of food will be immune from lawsuits arising from obesity, weight gain or the development of health problems associated with weight gain or obesity under a bill passed this session.

Economic Development

Tax Credit: Senate Bill 1099 created the Tax Credit Accountability Act to implement a system of reporting and accountability measures that were lacking among many existing tax credit programs. Allegations that the state's current system of awarding tax credits was being misused by people setting up fake businesses help spur passage of this legislation.